

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01779 072245Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6966
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS POUCH

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEBR, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: SUPPLY MIN GOYER WILL RETIRE

1. SUPPLY AND SERVICES MIN JEAN-PIERRE GOYER ANNOUNCED TO HIS MONTREAL CONSTITUENTS APRIL 6 THAT HE WOULD NOT RUN FOR REELECTION IN NEXT FEDERAL ELECTIONS.
2. GOYER'S ANNOUNCEMENT REMOVES FROM FEDERAL POLITICS ONE OF TRUDEAU'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL MINISTERS. DESCRIBED BY ROBERT STANFIELD IN 1972 AS "THE MOST INCOMPETENT MINISTER IN THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT...WITHOUT ANY DOUBT," GOYER HAD REMARKABLE CAPACITY FOR GETTING INTO POLITICAL TROUBLE-- AND SURVIVING.
3. HIS TENURE AS SOLICITOR GENERAL (1970-72) WAS TUMULTUOUS FOR SOME UNFORTUNATE PAROLE DECISIONS. RECENT REVELATIONS HAVE INDICATED, MOREOVER, THAT THIS WAS A PERIOD IN WHICH THE MOUNTIES WERE OPERATING IN A HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE MANNER, E.G. WITH THE BREAK-IN AT THE OFFICES OF AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE IN MONTREAL.

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4. AS MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES, GOYER'S TENURE HAS BEEN EQUALLY ROCKY. HE WAS BLAMED FOR 1976 FOUL-UP IN GOC COMMITMENT TO PURCHASE LRPA WITHOUT ALL FINANCIAL DETAILS HAVING BEEN WORKED OUT. HE THEN MADE MATTERS WORSE, AMONG CIVIL SERVICE AT LEAST, BY TRYING TO SHIFT BLAME TO ONE OF HIS DEPARTMENTAL ADVISERS, WHO IS NOW SUING HIM. ON ANOTHER MATTER, MEDIA HAD A FIELD DAY WHEN

IT LEARNED THAT HE HAD USED AN AIR CANADA PASS, CONTRARY TO REGULATIONS, FOR A TRIP BY HIS COMMON LAW WIFE.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY IMPRESSION IS THAT GOYER, DESPITE HIS PENCHANT FOR FOUL-UP, WAS MORE CAPABLE THAN HIS RECORD IN MEDIA WOULD INDICATE. AS AN ADVISER TO DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ON FRANCOPHONE MATTERS, FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAS PERFORMED CAPABLY. IN ANY CASE, GOYER'S CAREER ON PARLIAMENT HILL IS CURRENTLY INTERESTING NOT SO MUCH FOR GOYER'S ABILITIES AS FOR LIGHT IT SHEDS ON PM TRUDEAU'S REMARKABLE LOYALTY TO OLD QUEBEC CRONIES. IN 1968, GOYER HELPED DELIVER QUEBEC CAUCUS TO TRUDEAU IN LIBERAL LEADERSHIP RACE. DESPITE SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENTS HE CAUSED, GOYER WEATHERED EACH CABINET SHUFFLE, OBVIOUSLY PROTECTED BY TRUDEAU LOYALTY. WHILE THIS IS AN ATTRACTIVE TRAIT IN THE COMPLEX TRUDEAU PERSONALITY, IT HAS COST HIM POLITICALLY. DUEMLING

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